

**Fact Sheet
October 2002**

Proposed Central Los Angeles New Learning Center #1

(Ambassador Hotel Site)



DEPARTMENT OF TOXIC
SUBSTANCES CONTROL

PROPOSED REMOVAL ACTION

*DTSC is one of six
Boards and
Departments within
the California
Environmental
Protection Agency.
The Department's
mission is to restore,
protect and enhance
the environment,
to ensure public
health, environmental
quality and
economic vitality,
by regulating
hazardous waste,
conducting and
overseeing
cleanups, and
developing
and promoting
pollution
prevention.*

State of California



**California
Environmental
Protection Agency**



INTRODUCTION

This fact sheet describes an environmental investigation and proposed hazardous substance cleanup activities for a new school site planned for your neighborhood, the proposed Central Los Angeles New Learning Center #1 (also known as the Ambassador Hotel Site). The site is located at 3400 Wilshire Blvd., in Los Angeles. The site cleanup will be conducted by the Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD) under the oversight of the state Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC).

The LAUSD conducted an environmental investigation called a Preliminary Environmental Assessment at the proposed site. The investigation detected lead, Total Petroleum Hydrocarbons (TPH), and Volatile Organic Compounds (VOCs) in soil samples in concentrations that exceed DTSC health risk levels for proposed school properties (See glossary for technical term definitions). As a result of the PEA findings, LAUSD is proposing a site cleanup known as a removal action.

DTSC, a department of the California Environmental Protection Agency (Cal/EPA), determined that a removal action should be conducted to remove and eliminate the risk posed by these hazardous substances. Once the contaminated soil is removed, the potential risk associated with these compounds will be eliminated and the site will meet the environmental standards for schools. In addition methane was also detected in the soil near an abandoned exploratory corehole (test hole drilled for oil). Based on this finding, a plan is being developed under joint-regulatory oversight with the Department of Oil, Gas, and Geothermal Resources and the DTSC for the re-sealing of the corehole to ensure there is no leakage.

Ninyo & Moore, on behalf of LAUSD, has prepared a draft Removal Action Workplan for the cleanup of the contaminated soil. The DTSC is accepting public comment on the proposed removal action during a 30-day public comment period starting on October 18, 2002.

COMMUNITY MEETING & PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD

**Thursday, November 7, 2002
7:00 p.m.**

Immanuel Presbyterian Church
Geneva Hall (downstairs)
3300 Wilshire Blvd., Los Angeles
(Entrance and free parking lot on
Berendo Street)

You are invited to a community meeting. At this meeting DTSC will provide you with the results of the environmental investigation and information on the cleanup for this proposed school site. Spanish and Korean interpreters will be provided.

The DTSC encourages you to take an active interest in the issues related to this hazardous substance site cleanup by attending the meeting and submitting comments on the removal action plan.

You can submit comments on the draft Removal Action Workplan for this school site during the 30-day public comment period from:

**October 18
to November 17, 2002**

The draft removal action report and other project documents are available for public review at the Information Repositories listed at the end of this fact sheet.

For information on meeting room accessibility and to request reasonable accommodations, please contact Ms. Treva Miller, at (818) 551-2846.

The energy challenge facing California is real. Every Californian needs to take immediate action to reduce energy consumption. For a list of simple ways you can reduce demand and cut your energy costs, see our website at www.dtsc.ca.gov.

Site Description

The proposed 23-acre site consists of five property parcels. The Ambassador Hotel and its associated structures occupy a majority of the site. The remaining portions of the site include two residential properties along Mariposa Avenue; and one residential property, a vacant lot, and a parking lot on South Catalina Street, south of West 7th Street on the eastern portion of the site. A Budget car-rental office occupies a small structure along the north property line of the site, at 3380 Wilshire Blvd.

LAUSD is proposing to build an elementary school, a middle school, and a high school on this site. Students living in the mid-Wilshire/Korea town areas will attend the Ambassador Site schools, and it is anticipated that the proposed schools will help ease overcrowding at Hoover Elementary, Virgil Middle, Berendo Middle and Belmont High schools.

Site Investigation

The LAUSD conducted the Preliminary Environmental Assessment (PEA) at the proposed site to determine if any hazardous substances are present that pose a threat to public health or the environment. The field activities took place between January and May 2001. The preliminary field investigation consisted of soil sampling, historical information evaluation, and a health risk assessment. A PEA Report summarizing the findings was approved by DTSC in April 2002. The PEA Report recommended a focused Supplemental Site Investigation (SSI) in four areas. Supplemental investigation subsurface activities were conducted at the site in September 2001, December 2001, and January 2002. The primary objective of the supplemental investigation was to further determine the limits of the contaminated soil and/or soil vapors associated with the four areas. A SSI Report was completed in May 2002.

Environmental Investigation Results

Based on the environmental investigations, LAUSD determined that four areas required further action:

1. **Area A** - consisting of the driveway west of the former Ambassador Hotel north garage, concentrations of TPH and VOCs were found above DTSC health risk levels in the soil to an approximate depth of 22 feet underground. The source is most

likely three underground storage tanks that were suspected of formerly storing waste oil, gasoline, and diesel fuel.

2. **Area B** - consisting of the driveway west of the former Ambassador Hotel south garage, concentrations of TPH and VOCs were found above DTSC health risk levels in the soil to an approximate depth of 25 feet underground. The source is most likely an underground storage tank that was suspected of formerly storing fuels.
3. **Cooling Tower Area** - located within the central portion of the site. Concentrations of lead were found above DTSC health risk levels in the soil to an approximate depth of one-foot underground. The source is most likely associated with cooling tower waters and lead based paint residue.
4. **Ambassador Corehole No. 1 Area** - located in the vicinity of the parking lot along South Catalina Street, south of West 7th Street. Concentrations of methane were found above the DTSC action level. When methane is detected above this level a further response, such as a removal action, is required. The goal of the proposed removal action is to re-seal the Corehole and thereby reduce the methane concentration to below the DTSC action level. If this action should fail to reduce the concentrations to safe levels, then a separate Removal Action Workplan (RAW) for a methane mitigation system will be prepared by LAUSD and submitted to DTSC for review and approval.

Removal Action Workplan Scope

The draft Removal Action Workplan, prepared in June 2002, identifies and screens possible removal action alternatives. Removal action alternatives were screened and evaluated on the basis of their effectiveness, ability to implement, and cost.

Soil excavation and off-site treatment has been selected as the preferred cleanup alternative for Areas A and B, as well as the Cooling Tower Area. This alternative was selected because it was determined to be the most protective of human health and the environment, easily implemented, and cost effective. In addition, the underground storage tanks in Areas A and B will be removed.

Continued site monitoring using the existing multi-stage soil-gas probes and re-sealing the Corehole are the preferred cleanup alternatives for the Ambassador Corehole Area. This alternative was selected because it was determined to be the most protective of human health and the environment, easily implemented, and cost effective. If the quarterly monitoring results indicate that methane levels are exceeding the DTSC action level, then additional engineering controls may be implemented under a separate RAW.

Proposed Removal Action Activities

The soil removal fieldwork will be conducted under DTSC oversight. Excavation areas on the site will be secured and the contaminated soil will be removed using conventional construction equipment. During offsite disposal, the soil will be loaded onto trucks, covered, and transported to an approved offsite disposal facility. The estimated total volume of soil to be removed is approximately 1,329 in place cubic yards.

The soil will be excavated in a manner that reduces the potential to generate dust. While on the property, all vehicles will maintain slow speeds for safety purposes and for dust control. Dust control will be obtained by lightly spraying or misting the work areas with water. Water mist may also be used on soil placed in the transport trucks. Additionally, after the soil is loaded into the transport trucks, the soil will be covered to prevent soil from spilling or blowing out of the trucks during transport to the disposal facility. Air monitoring will be conducted during excavation and soil handling activities to measure for potential emissions.

Noise blankets will either be placed on, or attached to the chain-link fence in order to reduce noise in Areas A and B. In addition, work will be restricted to the hours of 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. on weekdays. If work on the weekend is required, work will be restricted to 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

When the excavation work is complete, confirmation sampling will be conducted to verify that all the chemically-contaminated soil has been removed. Once this verification has been approved by DTSC, the excavated areas will be backfilled and compacted with certified clean material, consistent with school construction specifications. A completion report will then be prepared and submitted to DTSC.

Notice of Exemption (NOE)

DTSC has prepared a draft Notice of Exemption (NOE) for this project pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). The NOE document states that the project will not have a significant negative effect on the environment because of the relatively low volume of contaminated soil to be excavated, short project duration, and the controlled manner in which contaminated soils will be excavated, loaded onto trucks and taken offsite for disposal/treatment.

What Happens Next?

Prior to making a final decision on the Proposed Central Los Angeles New Learning Center #1 Draft Removal Action Workplan, DTSC will receive comments during the **30-day public comment period** which ends on November 17, 2002. Comments may be submitted in writing to: *Ms. Laura Zaremba, Project Manager, Department of Toxic Substances Control, 1011 North Grandview Avenue, Glendale, California 91201*. Written comments must be postmarked by November 17, 2002.

Comments can also be submitted in person at the Community Meeting scheduled for November 7, 2002, at the Immanuel Presbyterian Church, located at the corner of Wilshire Boulevard and Berendo Street in Los Angeles.

After the public comment period, DTSC will evaluate all of the submitted comments. A copy of the formal responses to comments will then be mailed to everyone who submits a written comment with a return address. If the removal action plan is approved, fieldwork will begin within 30 days. Portions of the soil removal in Area A are expected to occur following LAUSD's development of site plans for this area. The plans are not expected to be prepared and approved until late 2004.

Glossary

Corehole – A large test hole drilled through or into masonry, rock or similar material using special circular cutting equipment to study the underground geology.

Lead – A heavy metal present in small amounts everywhere in the human environment. Lead can get into the body from drinking contaminated water, eating vegetables grown in contaminated soil, or breathing dust when children play or

adults work in lead-contaminated areas or eating lead-based paint. It can cause damage to the nervous system or blood cells. Children are at highest risk because their bodies are still developing. Lead and its compounds are listed as a reproductive toxic substance for women and men, and a cancer-causing substance under Proposition 65.

Methane – An odorless, colorless, flammable gas that is a major constituent of natural gas. It can seep up through the ground in areas that have shallow petroleum deposits or improperly abandoned oil wells, such as certain areas of the Los Angeles Basin.

Petroleum Hydrocarbons (TPH) – Compounds (including benzene, toluene, ethylbenzene and xylenes) frequently associated with vehicle fuels such as gasoline.

Removal Action Workplan (RAW) – An immediate action taken over the short-term to address a release or threatened release of hazardous substances.

Volatile Organic Compounds (VOCs) – Organic liquids, including many common solvents, that readily evaporate at temperatures normally found at ground surface and at shallow depths.

For More Information

If you have questions regarding the DTSC investigation or the proposed removal action, please contact:

Treva Miller, DTSC Public Participation Specialist,
(818) 551-2846; or

Laura Zaremba, DTSC Project Manager, (818) 551-2183.

Si desea información en español, comuníquese con el:

Eloy Florez, *Especialista en Participación Pública de el DTSC*, al (818) 551-2875.

Media Contact: Jeanne Garcia, DTSC Public Information Officer, (818) 551-2176.

LAUSD Contact:

If you have questions regarding the proposed school construction, relocation or other school related issues contact:

Tom Davis, Site Assessment Project Manager, LAUSD Office of Environmental Health and Safety, (213) 633-8258; or

Keith Packey, Project Manager, LAUSD Facilities Services Division, (213) 633-8218

Information Repositories

Project documents are available for public review at the following locations:

Felipe De Neve Branch Library

2820 W. 6th Street
Los Angeles, CA 90057
Contact: Reference Librarian
Phone: (213) 384-7676
Monday and Thursday 12:30 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.
Tuesday and Saturday 10:00 a.m. – 5:30 p.m.
Wednesday and Friday 12:30 p.m. – 5:30 p.m.
Sundays: Closed

Los Angeles Unified School District

Office of Communications
333 South Beaudry Avenue
Los Angeles, CA 90017
Contact: Susie Solano
Phone: (213) 241-6766
Hours: Monday-Friday 8:00 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.

Virgil Middle School
Administration Office
152 North Vermont Avenue
Los Angeles, CA 90004
Phone: (213) 388-0347

Memorial Branch Public Library

4625 West Olympic Boulevard
Los Angeles, CA 90019
Contact: Maggie Johnson, (323) 938-2732
Hours: Mondays & Wednesdays:
12:30 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.
Tuesdays and Thursdays: 12:30 p.m. – 5:30 p.m.
Fridays & Saturdays 10:00 a.m.–5:30 p.m.
Sundays: Closed

Department of Toxic Substances Control

Regional Records Office
1011 N. Grandview Avenue
Glendale, CA 91201
Contact: Jone Barrio
Phone: (818) 551-2886
Hours: Monday-Friday 8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.

Los Angeles Unified School District

Office of Environmental Health and Safety
355 South Grand Avenue, Sixth Floor
Los Angeles, CA 90071
Contact: Tom Davis
Phone: (213) 633-8258
Hours: Monday-Friday 8:00 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.

Notice to Hearing Impaired Individuals

TDD users can obtain additional information about this removal action by using the California State Relay Service (1-888-877-5378) to reach Treva Miller at (818) 551-2846.